

In the Claims:

Please add newly submitted claim 16 as below.

1. (Previously presented) Apparatus for producing asphaltene pellets comprising:

a) flow means that supplies hot asphaltene through a conduit to its outlet;

b) pellet producing means that breaks up the liquid stream of said hot asphaltene exiting the outlet of said conduit and produces pellets of asphaltene;

c) a reservoir or container that collects said pellets of asphaltene together with some fluid producing a slurry; and

d) transporting means that transports said slurry to the required location.

2. (Cancelled)

3. (Cancelled)

4. (Previously presented) Apparatus according to claim 6 wherein said transporting means includes a conduit that supplies the slurry to the required location.

5. (Previously presented) Apparatus according to claim 6 including a pump for pumping the slurry to said location.

6. (Previously presented) Apparatus for producing asphaltene pellets comprising:

a) flow means that supplies hot asphaltene through a conduit to its outlet;

b) pellet producing means that breaks up the liquid stream of said hot asphaltene exiting the outlet of said conduit and produces pellets of asphaltene;

c) a reservoir or container that collects said pellets of asphaltene together with some fluid producing a slurry;

d) transporting means that transports said slurry to the required location; and

wherein said pellet producing medium is water.

7. (Previously presented) A method for producing asphaltene pellets comprising the steps of:

a) supplying hot asphaltene through a conduit to its outlet;

b) breaking up the liquid stream of said hot asphaltene exiting the outlet of said conduit using a pellet producing medium to produce pellets of asphaltene;

c) collecting said pellets of asphaltene in a reservoir together with some fluid producing a slurry; and

d) transporting said slurry to a required location.

8. (Cancelled)

9. (Cancelled)

10. (Previously presented) A method for producing asphaltene pellets comprising the steps of:

a) supplying hot asphaltene through a conduit to its

outlet;

b) breaking up the liquid stream of said hot asphaltene exiting the outlet of said conduit using a pellet producing medium to produce pellets of asphaltene;

c) collecting said pellets of asphaltene in a reservoir together with some fluid producing a slurry; and

d) transporting said slurry to a required location; wherein said step of breaking up the liquid stream of hot asphaltene flowing out of the outlet of said conduit using a pellet producing medium so that pellets of asphaltene are produced is carried out by spraying a fluid so that the fluid contacts the asphaltene exiting said outlet of the conduit and pellets of asphaltene are produced.

11. (Cancelled)

12. (Previously presented) A method according to claim 10 including pumping the slurry to said location;

and wherein the step of collecting said pellets of asphaltene in a reservoir together with some fluid producing a slurry is carried out by collecting said pellets of asphaltene in a reservoir together with some liquid water producing a heavy hydrocarbon or asphaltene-water slurry;

and wherein the step of transporting said slurry to a required location is carried out by supplying said slurry via a conduit to

a required location.

13. (Previously presented) A method according to claim 10 wherein the step of spraying a fluid so that the fluid contacts the asphaltene exiting said outlet of the conduit and pellets of asphaltene are produced is carried out by spraying liquid water.

14. (Previously presented) A method according to claim 7 including grinding said asphaltene pellets and transporting the grinded asphaltene pellets to a location.

15. (Previously presented) Apparatus according to claim 6 wherein said pellet producing means includes spray means for spraying liquid water so that the liquid water contacts the asphaltene and breaks up the liquid stream of said hot asphaltene exiting said outlet of said conduit and produces pellets of asphaltene.

16. (New) Apparatus according to claim 1 wherein said pellet producing means comprises means for spraying a liquid towards the asphaltene exiting said outlet of the conduit whereby said asphaltene is cooled and pellets of asphaltene are produced.